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ASSESSMENT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM : A STUDY OF A RELIGIOUS CITY OF HARIDWAR, UTTARAKHAND

A Synopsis

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Introduction

Tourism is one of the ways through which our perception of 'world-view' is shaped. It is a type of travel in which individuals go to a specific location for several purposes, such as leisure, commerce, education, and religious activities. The travel and tourism industry have now been among the fastest- growing economies on the globe (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2006). It's a crucial instrument for boosting tourism destinations' economies and improving the nexus of international, national, and interregional ties. (Gill and Singh, 2013). This sector contributes significantly to the economy of any country, giving several socio-economic benefits such as job creation, foreign capital exchange, and the expansion and development of other industries like agriculture, construction, and handicrafts, among others. (Jaiswal et al., 2017). Ethnic tourism, cultural tourism, environmental tourism, recreational tourism, rural tourism, pilgrim tourism, medical tourism, spiritual tourism, business tourism, adventure tourism, and so on are examples of many types of tourism that exist based on forms, nature, preferences, and purposes (Singh & Sah., 2017).

Tourism profoundly impacts the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental aspects of destinations worldwide. This study focuses on the religious city of Haridwar in Uttarakhand, where tourism has brought significant changes. Haridwar, situated along the sacred river Ganges, holds immense spiritual importance for Hindus globally, attracting millions of tourists seeking religious experiences, cultural immersion, and participation in ancient rituals. This study aims to comprehensively assess the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental implications of tourism in Haridwar. The socio-cultural impact of tourism in Haridwar is a crucial aspect to examine. Tourism catalyzes the exchange of ideas and practices between tourists and residents, leading to the evolution of cultural norms and traditions. While it promotes cultural

appreciation and understanding, it may also result in cultural com modification, erosion of local identities, and social inequalities. Therefore, understanding the socio-cultural changes brought about by tourism is vitalin Haridwar. The economic implications of tourism in Haridwar have been substantial. The tourism industry has emerged as a major driver of economic growth, providing employment opportunities, fostering entrepreneurship, and contributing to the overall prosperity of the local economy. However, it is important to critically evaluate the distribution of economic benefits, the impact on local businesses, and the potential for sustainable economic development in Haridwar. The environmental impact of tourism cannot be overlooked in a city as ecologically sensitive as Haridwar. The increasing number of tourists puts a strain on natural resources and fragile ecosystems, leading to environmental degradation, pollution, and habitat loss. Balancing tourism development with the preservation of the natural environment is a complex challenge that needs to be addressed to ensure the sustainability of Haridwar's ecological assets. By conducting a comprehensive assessment of the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions of tourism in Haridwar, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the impact of tourism on the city. The findings will assist policymakers, local authorities, and stakeholders in formulating sustainable tourism strategies that prioritize the local community's well-being while preserving the city's cultural heritage and natural resources. Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader discourse on responsible and sustainable tourism, fostering a harmonious co existence between tourism and the host destination.

Review of literature

Ahmed (2015) has highlighted the direct, indirect, and induced impact of tourism on the Indian economy. The direct contribution can be seen in sectors like Entertainment, transport, and hospitality whereas the Indirect and induced

impact can be seen in the Investment and supply chain activities sector. The total impact of direct, indirect, and induced contribution is known as a Multiplier Effect. He concluded that there is a direct relationship between the intensity of Pilgrimage tourism and the generation of income and employment. Due to the increase in no. of pilgrims, there has been an increase in the direct and indirect earnings of shopkeepers, Hotels & Restaurants, and the resultant development of the entire society and area.

Ashfaq and Parveen (2014) argued that Tourism is the backbone of Jammu and Kashmir's Economy as is the 'Land of Walis' (Saints), and Pilgrimage occupies a central place. They arrived at such conclusions after analyzing the data obtained through Questionnaires and secondary data. The share of Pilgrimage tourism in the Economy of the state has risen to 7.20% in 2011-12 of the total Gross Receipts of the state. It has led to changes in the Land-use pattern, demographic set-up, culture, and economic conditions.

Clifford (1988) argues that culture has less to do about the roots and origins and more focus is on translations & transplantations. He talks about the societies undergoing the phases of transformation due to the forces of modernity, industrialization, and tourism. He concludes that cultural and political neutrality needs to be achieved while promoting tourism.

Hajare (2013) points to the fact that the development of tourism in the state leads to the creation of many Direct and indirect employment opportunities. Raigadh as a treasure trove with beautiful beaches like Alibag, Varsoli, etc, and historical forts like Raigad, Kulaba, and Janjira. The Elephant a caves and the Matheran hill station have their own unique rich culture and heritage. He concluded that the govt. bodies should work with local people to help Raigad achieve its tourism potential.

Ines (1996) states that a Pilgrimage tourist is one who visits a specific place and

whose intention of pilgrimage could be religious or non-religious in nature but within a Divine context.

Koundal (2016) gives the opinion that in Jammu & Kashmir, there are a number of religious and natural places of tourist attraction amongst which Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine occupies a prominent place. The importance of Pilgrimage Tourism has risen with the ongoing terrorist incidents all over the world. It is found that with the increase in no. of pilgrims there had been an increase in direct and indirect effect on the income and environment. Also, Pilgrimage Tourism should be encouraged and its negative impacts on the environment should be minimized.

Menon (1993) in his UNESCO-sponsored Case Study of Jaisalmer, Khajuraho, and Goa, talks about the Krippend orf framework for evaluating the phenomenon of tourism which is viewed as resultant of four forces. These forces are-Society with its values (the socio-cultural sub-system); the economy and its structure (the economic sub-system); the environment and its resources (the ecological sub-system) and the State and its policies (the political sub-system). Her aises his concern over the negative effects of Pilgrimage Tourism on culture and heritage with the increase in no. of tourists in coming years.

Virender Kaul (1994) Referring to Webster Dictionary advocates that: (Tourism and the Economy 1994) "The term tourist is derived from the word tour 'meaning' a circular trip usually for business, pleasure or education during which various places are visited and for which an itinerary is usually planned".

Pirece (1996) in his book viewed tourist destinations from five broad sectors namely attraction, transport, accommodation supporting facilities, and instructions. He explains that attractions encourage tourists to visit the location, the transport service enables them to do so, the accommodation and supporting facilities cater to the tourist's well-being during their stay and the infrastructure

assures essential functioning in all of the sectors.

Research gaps

While there has been some research conducted on the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental impact of tourism in Haridwar, Uttarakhand, there are several research gaps that warrant further investigation. These gaps include:

1) **Socio-cultural Dynamics:** While studies have examined the cultural changes resulting from tourism in Haridwar, there is a need for a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics between tourists and local residents. Exploring the interaction patterns, perceptions, and attitudes of both groups would provide insights in to the impact on local identity, social cohesion, and community well-being.

2) **Community Participation and Empowerment:** Examining the level of community participation and empowerment in tourism-related decision-making processes is essential. Research focusing on the involvement of local communities, particularly marginalized groups, in shaping tourism policies, resource management, and equitable distribution of benefits would shed light on the effectiveness of participatory approaches in Haridwar.

3) **Economic Leakage and Inclusive Growth:** While the economic impact of tourism in Haridwar has been acknowledged, there is a need to assess the extent of economic leakage and the mechanisms for promoting inclusive growth. Investigating the distribution of tourism revenues, the role of local businesses, and the potential for fostering entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihoods among the local population would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the economic impact of tourism.

4) **Sustainable Tourism Practices:** Assessing the effectiveness of

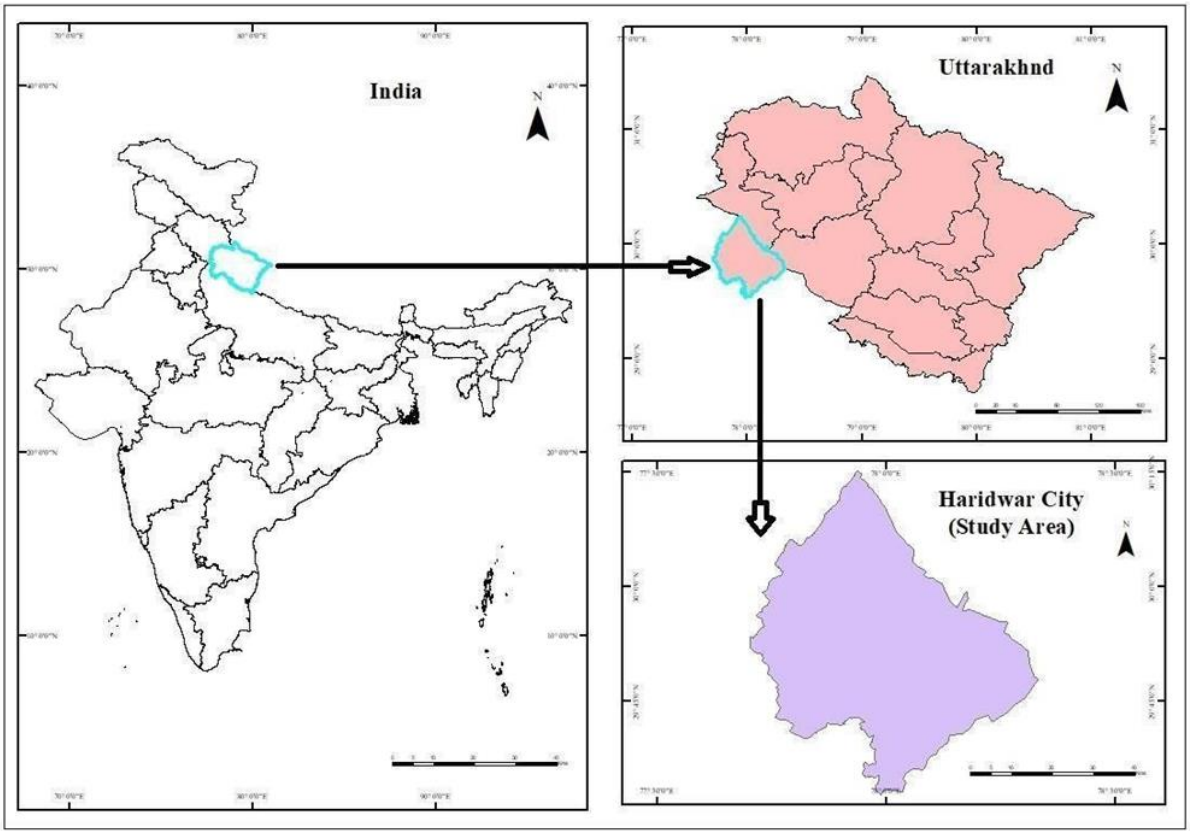
sustainable tourism practices and their implementation in Haridwar is crucial. Research exploring initiatives related to waste management, energy conservation, water resource management, and biodiversity conservation would provide insights into the current state of sustainability practices and identify areas for improvement.

5) **Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty:** Investigating the factors influencing tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty in Haridwar would contribute to enhancing the overall visitor experience. Understanding the key drivers of satisfaction, such as service quality, cultural authenticity, and the natural environment, would help in formulating strategies to improve visitor satisfaction and encourage repeat visits.

6) **Tourism Carrying Capacity:** Evaluating the tourism carrying capacity of Haridwar is essential to ensure the sustainable development of the destination. Assessing the limits of infrastructure, natural resources, and cultural heritage in relation to visitor numbers would aid in determining optimal visitor management strategies and mitigating negative impacts.

Study Area

Haridwar, located in Uttarakhand, is a religious city on the banks of the Ganges. It is known for its ancient temples, sacred ghats, and vibrant festivals. The city attracts tourists seeking spiritual experiences and cultural immersion. Haridwar's natural beauty and cultural heritage make it an ideal study are a to assess the impacts of tourism. However, managing the influx of visitors while preserving its cultural and ecological integrity poses challenges.



Objectives:-

1. To analyze the trends and patterns of tourist arrival in Haridwar.
2. To study the status and conditions of tourism infrastructure at Haridwar.
3. To assess the socio-cultural economic and environmental impacts of religious tourism on the local population.
4. To examine the major problems faced by tourists and suggest remedial measures to boost religious tourism in Haridwar.

.**Hypothesis:-**

1. Tourism has a significant positive impact on the local economy of Haridwar.
2. Tourism in Haridwar contributes to noticeable socio-cultural changes in the local community.

3. Tourism has led to considerable environmental degradation in Haridwar.

Research Methodology

The study will be dependent on mainly primary and secondary data. It proposes to generate qualitative and quantitative data form of various stakeholders like tour operators, hotel owners, etc. The data relating to the development of the tourism industry, problems, prospects, employment generation, and marking will be collected for analysis and interpretation of the study.

Primary Data

The study will be conducted based on primary data. The primary data will be collected through a well structure qualitative and quantitative questionnaire from the selected tourist. A questionnaire survey of minimum 600 tourists will be done to detect the major problems faced by tourists and to get there medial methods for this. A questionnaire and interview schedule will be adopted from different literature with modifications to suit the study. The questionnaire and interview schedule, multiple choice questions, open- ended and close-ended questions.

Secondary Data

There are many secondary data sources for the study like books, newspapers, articles, magazines, journals, government records and reports, research projections, the internet, MTDC, and other government officials. To monitoring data for the environmental impacts on destinations, research focuses on the following major components: -

- NDVI (normalized difference vegetation index)
- Land use/land cover change
- Solid waste management
- Public toilets facilities

Significance of study

1. **Holistic Understanding:** The study will provide a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental impact of tourism in Haridwar, enabling stakeholders to assess the overall implications and make informed decisions.
2. **Policy Guidance:** The findings will serve as a valuable resource for policy makers, local authorities, and tourism organizations in developing and implementing effective policies and regulations that promote sustainable tourism practices in Haridwar.
3. **Community Well-being:** By examining the socio-cultural impact, the study will shed light on the well-being of the local community, helping identify areas where community participation, empowerment, and inclusivity can be enhanced.
4. **Economic Development:** Understanding the economic impact of tourism will guide stakeholders in promoting inclusive growth, ensuring the equitable distribution of tourism revenues, and fostering entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihoods for local residents.
5. **Environmental Conservation:** The study will assess the environmental impact of tourism in Haridwar, providing insights into resource management, waste management, and the preservation of natural heritage. This knowledge will contribute to the development of sustainable practices and the protection of the region's ecological integrity.
6. **Destination Management:** The findings will assist in determining the tourism carrying capacity of Haridwar and formulating visitor management strategies to maintain a balance between tourism development and the preservation of cultural authenticity and natural resources.

Best Practices and Lessons Learned: The study will contribute to the broader knowledge base on sustainable tourism, providing insights, best practices, and lessons learned that can be applied not only to Haridwar but also to other similar religious and cultural destinations globally Overall, the significance of this study lies in its potential to guide stakeholders in fostering responsible and sustainable tourism development in Haridwar, ensuring the long-term well-being of the local community, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the protection of the environment.

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